

Eon	Era	Period	Epoch	Ma	Life Forms	N. American Tectonics
Phanerozoic (Phaneros = "evident"; zoic = "life")	Cenozoic	Quaternary	Recent, or Holocene	0.8	Modern man	Cascade volcanoes
			Pleistocene	1.8	Extinction of large mammals and birds	Worldwide glaciation
		Tertiary	Pliocene	5.3	Large carnivores	Uplift of Sierra Nevada
			Miocene	23.8	Whales and apes	Linking of N. & S. America
			Oligocene	33.7		Basin-and-Range Extension
			Eocene	55.5	Early primates	Laramide orogeny ends (West)
			Paleocene	65		
	Mesozoic	Cretaceous		145	Mass extinctions Placental mammals Early flowering plants	Laramide orogeny (West) Sevier orogeny (West) Nevadan orogeny (West)
		Jurassic		213	First mammals Flying reptiles	Elko orogeny (West) Breakup of Pangea begins
		Triassic		248	First dinosaurs	Sonoma orogeny (West)
	Paleozoic	Permian			Mass extinctions Coal-forming forests diminish	Super continent Pangea intact Ouachita orogeny (South) Alleghenian (Appalachian) orogeny (East)
		Pennsylvanian		286	Coal-forming swamps Sharks abundant	Ancestral Rocky Mts. (West)
		Mississippian		325	Variety of insects First amphibians	
		Devonian		360	First reptiles Mass extinctions	Antler orogeny (West)
		Silurian		410	First forests (evergreens)	Acadian orogeny (East-NE)
		Ordovician		440	First land plants Mass extinctions	
				505	First primitive fish Trilobite maximum	Taconic orogeny (NE)
		Cambrian		544	Rise of corals	Avalonian orogeny (NE)
	Proterozoic (("Early life"))	Precambrian			1st multicelled organisms	Formation of early supercontinent
				2500	Jellyfish fossil (670Ma)	First iron deposits Abundant carbonate rocks
				~3800	Early bacteria & algae	Oldest known Earth rocks (~3.93 billion years ago)
					Origin of life?	Oldest moon rocks (4-4.6 billion years ago)
	Hadean (("Beneath the Earth"))	Precambrian				Earth's crust being formed
				4600	Formation of the Earth	

Figure 10. Geologic time scale; adapted from the U.S. Geological Survey. Red lines indicate major unconformities between eras. Included are major events in life history and tectonic events occurring on the North American continent. Absolute ages shown are in millions of years.